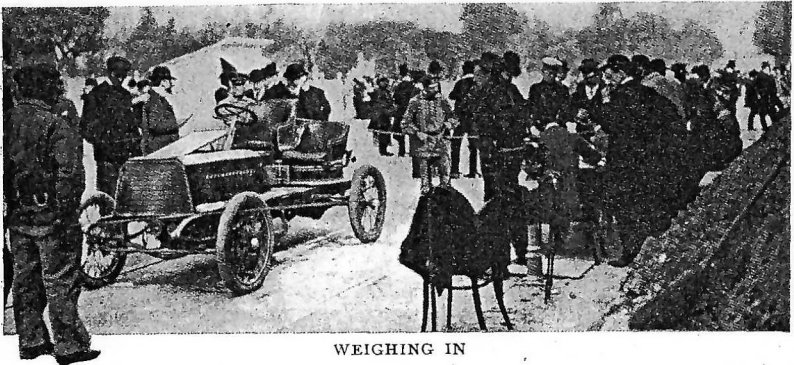


The World's Greatest Race

By Marcel Dupré

WITH a death roll of seven killed and equal number seriously injured, the race of which so much had been expected, that from Paris to Madrid, was brought to inglorious finish at Bordeaux, both the French and the Spanish governments having declined to let the affair be carried out as planned.

That such should have been the record and the finish of an affair upon which so much time, thought and money had been spent all must regret. That the accidents attending the affair should have been so numerous and so fatal was due not to carelessness, not to recklessness, nor yet to sheer dare-deviltry of those participating, as the enemies of the automobile would have the world believe. To



WEIGHING IN

the contrary none better than those who arranged the race, built the racers and guided them knew the danger they themselves ran and others encountered by the running of these leviathans of modern locomotion at a speed greater than 70 miles an hour.

Primarily the cause of most of the misfortune attending what was probably the last race of its kind which will ever be attempted, was the unprecedented increase in the number of those who from far and near came and camped upon the course from one end of it to the other. Those composing this army of sightseers apparently had no idea of the danger they were in and all the totally inadequate police and military guardians could do to warn them was likewise without avail. The consequence was the contestants were expected to race safely through a narrow lane of humanity, and that they should have done so without accident would have been a miracle, that they failed was but to have been expected, and that the grue-

some list of dead and injured was not far greater is marvelous, and speaks volumes for the capability of the racers.

But all this the public neither knows, nor cares. Suffice it for them that men have been killed and maimed, that the public highway has been turned from a roadway open to the use of all into a speedway given over to vehicles closely akin to locomotive and propelled at a speed which few engines even on tracks of steel have any hopes of equaling in speed.

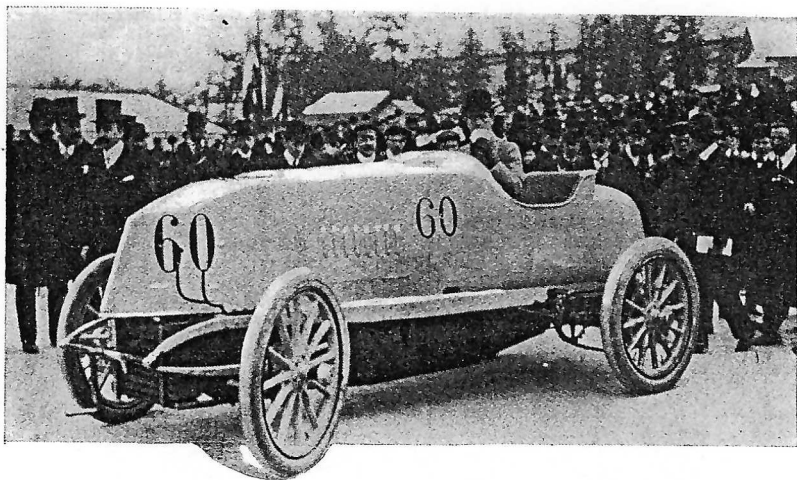
Of the first, and as it turned out to be the final, stage of the race only a brief outline can be given. Beginning on Monday, May



STAMPING A VEHICLE AFTER WEIGHING IT

19, the weighing of the racing cars proceeded almost without intermission and yet so great were their numbers that it was not until the following Saturday, the day before the race started, that this necessary formality was completed. All day Saturday and all that night the people of Doris flocked to the little town of Versailles from where the race was to start. Some idea of the size of this outpouring may be gained when official estimates placed the number of those who journeyed upon bicycles alone at 100,000. As the French cyclist has attached himself to the automobile as a sort of admiring, worshiping younger brother the confusion, danger and annoyance his presence in such numbers caused can easily be imagined.

The exceptional advantage of being the first to be sent away had by a strange chance fallen to the lot of an Englishman, Charles Jarrott, who was piloting a 45 H. P. DeDietrich car. At five minutes of four o'clock on Sunday morning a bomb was fired to warn the assembled multitude that the race was to start, five minutes later a second bomb told the assemblage that the race had begun,



W. K. VANDERBILT, JR., AND HIS 70 H. P. MORS

and Jarrott shot away at express speed for what he and everyone thought was Madrid

At intervals of a minute apart 223 racing vehicles were dispatched after Jarrott. Of these 138 were heavy and light cars, 76 of which reached Bordeaux; 32 voiturettes, of which 21 survived; while of the 53 motor bicycles starting but 13 showed up at the finish. Eight vehicles used alcohol for fuel, but none of them was lucky enough to land among the winners of other than special prizes, some examples of which were the thirty-six cash ones of a value of \$9,000 offered by the makers of the Continental tires to vehicles successfully competing with this particular make of tire.

A maximum time of 24 hours was allowed to cover the 342 1-2 miles intervening between Versailles and Bordeaux. Competitors were not permitted to accept the assistance of outsiders to effect repairs or replenishments. These had to be carried out in the "running time" by the driver and his assistant. By this method the absurd rule pertaining in previous contests was overcome, which allowed manufacturers to have small armies of assistants scattered along the entire route ready to remedy any possible mishap.

Another innovation was the appearance for the first time in French road racing of the team idea. Under this plan a firm may enter teams of the same make of four vehicles, whether owned by private owners or otherwise. If all four vehicles finish their times are added together. If any of them drop out they are allowed for only up to the last control where they were checked. The prin-

ciple was adopted because it was argued this would be a convincing method of demonstrating the capabilities of any particular firm to turn out a number of reliable racing cars.

No one maker was allowed to enter more than one team in each class. Altogether 21 groups of 4 cars each were entered, as follows:

Heavy Cars—1, Charron-Giradot-Voigt; 2, DeDietrich; 3, Mercedes; 4, Pipe; 5, Gardner-Serpollet; 6, Wolseley.

Light Cars—1, Clement; 2, Darracq; 3, Decauville; 4, De Dion-Bouton; 5, Prosper-Lambert; 6, Renault frères; 7, G. Richard-Brazier.

Voiturettes—1, Ader; 2, Corre; 3, De Dion-Bouton; 4, Passy-Thellier; 5, Renault frères; 6, G. Richard-Brazier.

Motor Bicycles—1, Clement; 2, Peugeot frères.

The finish at Bordeaux was a decided triumph for the heavy vehicle as opposed to the lighter ones, the first twelve of the 110 vehicles finishing within the requirements of the race with the time taken by each to travel all of 350 miles of roads being as follows:

	h.	m.	s.		h.	m.	s.
1 Gabriel (Mors)...	5	13	31	7 Voigt (C.G.V)...	6	1	9½
2 Louis Renault (Renault frères)	5	33	59	8 Gasteaux (Mercedes)	6	8	0.
3 Saleron (Mors) ..	5	46	1	9 A.Fournier(Mors)	6	11	39
4 Jarrott(DeDietrich)	5	51	55	10 Baras (Darracq) .	6	12	49
5 Warden(Mercedes)	5	56	30¾	11 Rougier (Turcat-Mery)	6	16	7¾
6 De Crawhez (Panhard)	6	1	8¾	12 Mouter (DeDietrich)	6	17	54½

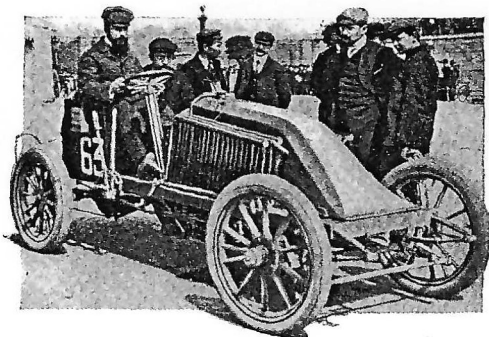
The fairest summary of the entire affair and which must commend itself to all is the one wherein the *Automotor Journal* thus editorially points out the cause of the unfortunate happenings and the cure therefor:

“We have not on the previous occasions of the Paris-Berlin and Paris-Vienna races felt called upon to take up a hostile attitude towards undertakings of the kind, for in both these events the accident list was an amazingly small one. Even as compared with last year, however, the number of spectators along the line of route increased enormously, and the increase of car power, and consequently of speed, and above all in the number of competing cars, has been even greater.

"The accidents which good management and probably good fortune avoided previously have taken place on the present occasion, and on a really tragic scale. Probably the increase in the number of cars, with the consequent necessity of starting a competitor every minute (and the motor bicycles in pairs), was the most powerful contributing cause. Whatever the cause or combination of causes may have been, however, there is no doubt that neither the people nor the authorities will tolerate another race on anything like the same lines.

"The position at present is much as follows: Every car successfully competing in a great Continental race provides the most paying form of advertisement for the firm that built it. It is not a little difficult to understand why this should be so, for there is no real connection between the two things. The element of chance comes in so largely, and there are such differences of skill between the drivers, that the excellence of the car is by no means the only factor, besides which a firm might devote all its energies to the construction of a few first-class racers and remain all the time almost novices at building ordinary commercial or touring cars.

"One point also must not be forgotten. High-powered racers are capable of taking almost any hill on the top speed. Only exceptionally, and for short intervals, do they employ their lower gears, and this alone discounts seriously the value for ordinary car building of experience gained in their construction. The public, however, seems determined to buy from the firms that win the races, and no motor car builders—whatever their position—can, consequently, afford to neglect races, as long as races are held. If they hang back others will press forward, and the popular favor which was theirs will be bestowed on others.



M. RENAULT
Winner of last year's Paris-Vienna, who was
killed in this race

"At the same time it is worth while considering whether road races could not be so organized and managed as to afford constructors the publicity and advertisement which they need and desire, to minimize and even practically eliminate danger to the drivers and the public, and above all to afford possible and intending purchasers

a much better and more satisfactory guide in selecting the firms from whom they decide to purchase their vehicles than is afforded by road races as hitherto arranged and exemplified by either the Paris-Berlin, Paris-Vienna, and above all Paris-Madrid contests.

"This might be done, as far as petrol cars are concerned, by the adoption of a proposal that has already been put forward in the case of motor bicycle races, that is to restrict the total piston displacement of the engines. This means that the competing cars will be to a large extent limited as to power and speed. Differences between cars will then depend on such questions as the successful maintenance of reasonably high compression, the perfection with which the cylinders are synchronized, and the satisfactory working of such parts as carbureters and ignition apparatus. The actual engine speed maintainable will also depend upon perfection of construction.

"The engine that continues running fastest for a reasonable length of time is the best engine, and the eventual purchaser would not, in practice, run it at racing speed, and so under ordinary working conditions its life would be prolonged. Apart from the power developed by the engine the speed of the car will depend on the all-round efficiency of the transmission. Such a proposal only applies, of course, to petrol cars with change-speed gearing. Special provisions would have to be adopted in the case of steam vehicles and of any petrol cars which may in the future dispense with any change-speed gearing.

"If such restrictions were imposed it would be easy to insure that the average speed of the race would never be dangerously high. Of course competitors might fit the lightest bodies they chose. But otherwise they would be racing with machines corresponding to ordinary touring requirements, and the results would prove a real guide to the purchasing public, and would unquestionably afford indications of which were the best cars, for the difference between racing strain and ordinary touring conditions would make up the difference.

"To minimize danger resulting from overcrowding, to say nothing of the greater fairness to all contestants, a maker should, we think, be restricted to entering two vehicles only of the same type. There is no real objection to such a course, in fact, unfairness results from allowing manufacturers too many strings to their bows. This would at present reduce the number of entries to more reasonable proportions, and so permit a longer time interval between the startings, thus diminishing the amount of dust and its serious attendant dangers."